

Civil War: 1863 Campaign

Background

By 1863, the Civil War had raged two years. In the East, a Union Army of 90,000 men under General Hooker faced a Confederate Army of 50,000 men under General Lee in northern Virginia. In the West, a Union army of 70,000 men under General Grant besieged a Confederate army of 30,000 men under General Pemberton at Vicksburg, the last major Confederate fort on the Mississippi River. Nearby camped another Confederate army of 30,000 men under General Johnston. Confederate President Davis had 25,000 reinforcements that he could send to either General Lee or General Johnston.

Reinforce Lee and Invade the North By "Jack Thomason"

Our situation is getting desperate. Every major battle but one has been fought on southern soil. That, combined with the northern blockade is causing shortages of food, salt, and other supplies. Inflation is destroying our economy. What cost \$1 in 1861 now costs \$10. The North has more than 4 times as many white men as the south, so they easily replace men lost in battle. We must do something dramatic.

However, we faced similar odds during the first year of the American Revolution. We were fighting the most powerful nation on earth, our armies had lost nearly every battle, and our enemy had captured our largest city. We recognized then that the key to victory was to convince another major country to join our side. When we defeated and captured a British army at the battle of Saratoga, we achieved that goal. France joined us. And, with its help, we won our independence.

Since this war began, we have refused to sell cotton to Britain, hoping to convince that nation to help us. Our embargo policy is now working. Unemployment among textile workers in Britain has increased dramatically. The British House of Commons will soon vote on a motion to recognize the Confederacy as a separate country. French Emperor Napoleon III has said that he will help us if Britain does. Now is our last, best chance to win another "Saratoga."

We should send our reinforcements to General Lee and let him invade the North. If he wins a major victory there, he is sure to capture a Union army or one of its major cities. This will convince Britain and France to help us.

Some people claim the British and French will never join our cause. They think the best strategy is to hold out until 1864 and hope that someone willing to let us become independent beats Lincoln in the presidential election that year.

But, even if they are right, we should still send the reinforcements to Lee. Capturing a major northern city will do more to defeat Lincoln than simply holding our ground. And, if we do not give northern Virginia a chance to grow corn and wheat, we will never be able to hold out until 1864. Most importantly, it is probably already too late to save Vicksburg. It may take a month to get the troops to Johnston.

Johnston is a good general, but Robert E. Lee is the best general in this war. He defeated McClellan outside Richmond, Pope at Manassas, Burnside at Fredericksburg, and Hooker at Chancellorsville. He was outnumbered in every one of those battles. In desperate times like this, we must place our resources and confidence in our best commander. We must give Lee an opportunity to turn the tide in this war.

Reinforce Johnston and Save Vicksburg

By "Mary Almond"

There are two ways to win this war. First, we can convince Britain and France to help us. Second, we can convince northerners that fighting us isn't worth their sacrifice.

Last year, we lost our chance to convince Britain and France to help us. At that time, a majority of the British House of Commons probably favored recognizing us as a separate country. We simply needed to achieve a military victory to convince them we could win the war. However, General Lee's invasion of the North ended at the battle of Sharpsburg. Afterwards, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. This convinced many Europeans that we are fighting to preserve slavery. The British will not join forces with a nation it believes is fighting to preserve slavery.

The only option available to us now is to hold out until northerners quit. In just a year and a half, northerners will have a presidential election. If a candidate who favors peace defeats Lincoln, we are sure to win our independence.

We should be optimistic about this option. Last year, Democrats who favor peace were elected governor of New Jersey and New York and gained 34 additional seats in the U.S. Congress. And, despite the sacrifice of tens of thousands of northerners' lives in two years of war, they have only captured one Confederate state, Tennessee. If we deny them any major victories for the next year and a half, they will surely tire of the war. We must send the reinforcements to General

Johnston. His army, combined with Pemberton's in Vicksburg, will then outnumber Grant's. This will force Grant to retreat. Vicksburg will be saved.

We must not underestimate the value of Vicksburg. If we lose Vicksburg, the North will control the entire Mississippi River. We will no longer receive the ammunition that is smuggled into Texas. Instead, they will use the river to export wheat to Europe. And, if Vicksburg's defenders surrender, Grant's army will outnumber Johnston's by more than 2 to 1. If we lose Vicksburg now, we are sure to lose Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia by the end of 1864.

A major victory by General Lee will not offset such dramatic losses. Northerners are not going to give up just because we capture Washington, D.C., if they capture all of the Confederate states west of the Appalachian Mountains.

During both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the British captured our capital. Neither time did those defeats convince Americans that those wars were lost.

Those conflicts teach us that independence will only be won through perseverance, not a single dramatic battle. If we are to persevere to victory in 1864, we must save Vicksburg now. We must send the reinforcements to Johnston.

Name _____ Date _____

Civil War: 1863 Campaign Worksheet

- 1) According to Thomason, during what Revolutionary War battle did Americans capture a British army and convince France to join their cause? _____
- 2) What are three battles that Thomason claims General Lee won and which Union general did he defeat in each battle? _____

- 3) According to Almond, what battle ended Lee's invasion of the North in 1862?

- 4) According to Almond, how many additional seats in the U.S. Congress did Democrats win in the 1862 elections? _____
- 5) Compare and contrast the views of Thomason and Almond on the lessons the Revolutionary War teaches about what should be done now. _____

- 6) Compare and contrast the views of Thomason and Almond on whether Britain might help the Confederates if they win a big battle now. _____

(Over please)

- 7) Which person do you agree with and what is their most persuasive example or statistic?

- 8) What do you think would have happened if Britain and France agreed to help the Confederates, but only by using their navies to fight the U.S. navy?
